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The 2008 Annual Town Report is dedicated to several members of our Community, once active in Town or School government, and community activities, who left us this past year.

Our hope is that they are on a journey to a better place.

### **Ruth Anderson**

Ruth Anderson lost her courageous battle with cancer in September, one day before the NH Primary, a day when she would have been deeply involved in helping out at the polls. Ruthie beat the odds for more than six years from her original diagnosis, and serves as a role model for anyone battling a life-threatening illness. Her courage and remarkable spirit will forever be admired.

Ruthie was a proud native to Fremont and loved handing down to her friends and family the "history" of Fremont and its residents. On many occasions she offered up details we could not find in records, about a particular property or person, as well as many a fascinating fact that she remembered from her youth.

We still miss her activity in the Selectmen's Office, where she had to stop working in June of 2006 to tend to her increasing health issues. She never stopped hoping she would come back to work, and her desk still sits in our office. Ruthie faithfully served as the Deputy Tax Collector from March 1993 through October 2007;

remaining on board even after her daughter Mary "retired" from being the Tax Collector after 27 years. Ruthie's help taking calls at home helped Mary and the community with tax questions; and it was extremely difficult for Ruth to give up this position. Ruth was the Assistant School District Treasurer for the past few years, helping Betty Stanley with many a bank run and mailing of checks.

For more than 30 years, Ruth and her husband Hollis owned and operated Bessie's Restaurant; in Fremont and later in Brentwood. Ruthie retired from that in 1992 when Hollis became ill.

Ruth came from a long line of community involvement, with her father and mother Merton and Bessie Healey being involved in town government for years as well. Her family came first and she was always sharing stories of her children and grandchildren.

Ruth also served as a member of the Fremont School Board for several years, and was a Ballot Clerk for many years, serving at numerous busy elections.



*"Sweet is the memory of distant friends! Like the mellow rays of the departing sun, it falls tenderly, yet sadly, on the heart."*

~ Novelist and Historian Washington Irving (1783 - 1859)

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**COVER PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY of KRISTY BUTLER**

### **Barbara Baker**

Barbara Baker was involved in Fremont local government for more than 30 years. She moved here in 1962 and was our longest-serving Supervisor of the Checklist, serving a record 30 consecutive years. Her daughters also remember her delivering mail when they first moved to Town, with native George Towle. Barb was a Library Trustee for 10 years and deeply involved through the process of studying and building our new library. It was among her greatest accomplishments and her favorite place in town.

Barb was also the Police Department Administrative Assistant for 12 years until her retirement in 2005.



She thought of the members of the Police Department and administrative offices as members of her family.

She thoroughly enjoyed working there and taking care of everyone there.

Barb was a true friend and cared about those around her. She appreciated her many friendships and the pleasure they gave her. She enjoyed spending time in her garden and with her family and neighbors.

She was also a member of the Fremont Garden Club, and is pictured here receiving a plaque from then-President Aja Mahoney in 2007. She was a member of the Women's Guild for the Fremont Methodist Church.

Barb was also a huge fan of her beloved Patriot's.

### **Lester Blackwell Jr**

Les served as the Town's Building Inspector from 1971 to 1974; was the Health Officer in 1971; a Police Officer from 1972 to 1974; and the Civil Defense Director from 1970 to 1975. He was a US Navy Veteran and served with the Seabee's during WW II. He also served for many years as a Special Deputy with the Rockingham County Sheriff's Department, and was at one time owner of the Village Market in Fremont.

### **John "Jack" Burke**

While Jack had not been in Fremont too many years, he quickly became involved when he saw a need, in an advertised position for Trustee of the Trust Funds. Jack and his wife Adele served in various community positions in Newfields before they came to Fremont.



### **Rowena LeClair**

Rowena was the oldest living native in Fremont when she died in August.

She was an active member of the Methodist Church, the Fremont Community Club, the 1964 Bicentennial Committee; and a founding member of the Fremont Historical Society. She was also a member of the Fremont Grange before it disbanded in 1972. She is also remembered for making venison mincemeat pies!

Rowena (Rogers) LeClair pictured left

Photo taken June 1993 is courtesy of Matthew Thomas

### **Brande McLean**

Brande lost her courageous battle with cancer in April. She put up a good fight and taught us about strength to when facing the difficult battles. Brande was one of the Founders and first President of the Fremont Garden Club; and served as a member of the Cable Access / Contract Renewal Committee up until her death. She was the Chair of that Committee and pursued cable access with great energy for the Community. She also served briefly as one of Fremont's representatives to the Rockingham Planning Commission.



### Philip Peterson

Philip Peterson will always be remembered for his beautiful farm on Martin Road, whether he was on the tractor or sitting quietly in his chair dressed in his trademark overalls, Philip always offered a friendly wave to anyone who passed by his rolling farmland on Martin Road, or "Philip's Road" as most people around here called it.

Philip served a term on the Fremont Board of Selectmen from 1970 - 1972; was a member of the then Conservation Committee from 1972 to 1976; acted as the Town's Overseer of Welfare from 1971 to 1972; and the Deputy Dog Officer from 1969-1970.

Philip died in his sleep in the same bedroom at the Fremont farmhouse where he was born in 1929. Seen as an icon by many, Philip Peterson was among the most recognizable names in the

towns of Fremont and Epping. He was a longtime New Hampshire dairy farmer who ran the 300-acre Brookvale Farm - precious farmland that's been in the family for generations along the Fremont/Epping town line. He was a salt-of-the-earth kind of guy who made his living down on the farm, raising his dairy cows and after retiring from the dairy business in the 1980s, raising pigs and beef cattle. To Philip, the farm was more than just a farm. It was a place to be shared. He wanted people to make use of the open space, so he never complained when people walked the paths along the fields, fished in his pond, and rode their bicycles and recreational vehicles.

Philip was always giving of himself and his land, and over the years, people caught on to his generosity. He allowed the Boy Scouts to camp on the farm, and two years ago Fremont's fire department and rescue squad held its first haunted hayride fundraiser at the farm.

Philip made news as well when he made sure to always offer the farmer's perspective at local board meetings. While not everyone agreed with his way of thinking all of the time, you had to respect his opinion. He had common sense and Yankee ingenuity.

Thank you to Jason Schreiber for these excerpts and photo, reprinted from Jason's column in the Union Leader the week following Philip's death.

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**Fond remembrances of all those community members who are no longer with us.**

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Thank you to Barb Baker's daughter's Jane, Laurie and Dee Dee; Ruth Anderson's daughter Mary; Phil Peterson's nephew Jason Schreiber; Dick Rand, Lori Holmes, Meredith Bolduc; and Matthew Thomas for their input and assistance on these fond remembrances.

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*"I do not wish to treat friendships daintily, but with the roughest courage. When they are real, they are not glass threads or frostwork, but the solidest thing we know."*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson  
1803 - 1882